(d) if so, the terms and conditions laid down for such procurement?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERN ANDES): (a) and (b) The Russian Deputy Prime Minister visited India during 14—16 October 2001. No agreement was signed during the visit.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

VRS to Army Officers

2453. SHRI K. RAMA MOHAN A RAO: Will the Minsiter of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to offer VRS to army officers;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by when Government are going to implement the VRS for the officers?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Shortage of Officers in Army

2454. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a shortage of about one-third of sanctioned strength of officers of the rank of Major, Captain and others inspite of the fact that women are being inducted in the Army;

(b) whether one of the reason for many not coming forward to join the officers cadre is laying a great emphasis on fluency of English language; and

(c) if so, whether Government would consider to do away with the language criteria?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) Yes, Sir. Army has been experiencing shortage of officers in the lower ranks.

(b) and (c) Though the written tests conducted by the UPSC, for induction of officers in Army are conducted in English only, fluency in English language is not compulsory for Service Selection Board tests and interviews. The candidates are at liberty to write and speak cither in Hindi or in English.

Compulsory Military Service for Able-bodied Citizens

2455. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY:
SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have ever considered introducing Compulsory Military Service for its able-bodied citizens as in Western/European countries;

(b) whether such a move will enable the citizens to develop team-spirit and sense of patriotism; and

(c) whether such a force can also assist the civil authorities in times of exigencies and calamities, sparing the regular defence personnel?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Docs not arise in view of (a) above.

Officials of defence Ministry Booked by CBI for Supply of Sub-Standard Ammunitions

2456. SHRI JIBON ROY: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that one retired Lieutenant General and two senior officials of the defence Ministry had been booked by CBI for supply of substandard ammunitions to Indian Army, causing a loss of Rs. 19,30,09,464/-; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?